

- 1        1. A method in a computer system for capturing and administering digital  
2        images, comprising:
  - 3        (a) electronically receiving image data into an input module which is  
4                configured to buffer a desired quantity of image data at any given time;
  - 5        (b) activating a trigger to create a trigger event;
  - 6        (c) in response to the trigger event, a processing module electronically  
7                capturing a digital image from the image data received by the input  
8                module;
  - 9        (d) in response to the trigger event, the processing module creating a data  
10              structure and storing the digital image in the data structure along with  
11              pre-defined identification data;
  - 12        (e) storing the data structure in a database; and
  - 13        (f) providing a user interface such that a user is allowed to use and access a  
14              data structure stored in the database.
- 15
- 16        2. A method as in claim 1, wherein the user interface comprises a web  
17              browser and further comprising a video signal generator generating the image data.
- 18
- 19        3. A method as in claim 2, wherein the web browser is configured to allow  
20              the user to access the digital image through a computer network.
- 21
- 22        4. A method as in claim 2, wherein the web browser is configured to allow  
23              the user to display, print, playback, and store the digital image on a remote computer.
- 24
- 25        5. A method as in claim 2, wherein the video signal generator is a video  
26              camera.

1           6. A method as in claim 5, wherein the image data transmitted from the video  
2 camera is in digital format.

3  
4           7. A method as in claim 1, wherein the input module buffers the desired  
5 quantity of image data according to the last in, first out (LIFO) protocol.

6  
7           8. A method as in claim 1, wherein the trigger is activated automatically  
8 based on the passage of time.

9  
10          9. A method as in claim 1, wherein the trigger is activated manually by a  
11 user.

12  
13          10. A method as in claim 1, further comprising:  
14              storing the data structure in the database in response to the database being  
15 available; and

16              storing the data structure in local storage in response to the database being  
17 unavailable.

18  
19          11. A method as in claim 1, further comprising:  
20              initially storing the data structure in local storage in response to the database  
21 being unavailable ; and  
22              transferring at least one data structure from local storage to the database in  
23 response to the database becoming available.

24  
25          12. A method as in claim 1, further comprising:  
26              archiving the image data to an archive medium;

1 recording in a catalog the location of the archive medium and at least one  
2 identifier relating the archive medium to a location within an archive; and  
3 offering the catalog for use by the user.

4

5 13. A method as in claim 1, further comprising:  
6 indexing the data structure to facilitate retrieval of the image data at a later point  
7 in time.

8

9 14. A method as in claim 1, wherein use by the user comprises at least one of  
10 e-mailing, printing, faxing, copying, viewing, displaying, manipulating and  
11 broadcasting the image data.

12

13 15. A method as in claim 1, further comprising:  
14 prior to step (b), a user defining the pre-defined identification data.

15

16 16. A method as in claim 1, wherein the digital image is compressed using a  
17 joint photographic experts group (JPEG) algorithm.

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19 17. A method as in claim 1, wherein the processing module electronically  
20 captures a plurality of digital images to create a video clip.

21

22 18. A method as in claim 17, wherein the video clip is compressed using a  
23 motion picture experts group (MPEG) algorithm.

1           19. In a computer system, a method for capturing and administering digital  
2           images, the method comprising:

3                 providing a medical video camera configured to record desired images of a  
4           medical procedure;

5                 electronically receiving video data from the medical video camera into an input  
6           module which is configured to convert the video data into image data and buffer a  
7           desired quantity of image data at any given time;

8                 activating a trigger to create a trigger event;

9                 in response to the trigger event, a processing module electronically capturing a  
10          digital image from the image data received by the input module;

11                 in response to the trigger event, the processing module creating a desired data  
12          structure and storing the digital image in the data structure along with pre-defined  
13          identification data;

14                 storing the data structure in a database; and

15                 providing a user interface such that a user is allowed to use and access a data  
16          structure stored in the database from a remote location.

17  
18           20. A method as in claim 19, wherein the medical video camera is a camera  
19          selected from the group consisting of a computerized axial tomography (CAT scan)  
20          machine, an x-ray machine, a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine, a patient bed  
21          monitoring camera, an arthroscope, a laparoscope, an ultrasound machine, and a general  
22          purpose camera.

23  
24           21. A system for capturing and administering digital images, comprising:  
25                 an input device configured to electronically receive and buffer image data such  
26          that a desired quantity of image data is available at any given time;

- 1           a storage device configured to maintain a database and a plurality of data  
2 structures;
- 3           a trigger configured to create a trigger event signal;
- 4           a user interface configured to receive user commands and present data for use  
5 by a user; and
- 6           a processor connected to the digital input receiver, storage device, trigger, and  
7 output device and programmed to,
- 8           electronically capture a digital image from the input device in response to  
9 the trigger event signal,
- 10          create a data structure and store the digital image and pre-defined  
11 identification data in the data structure,
- 12          store the data structure in the database within the storage device, and  
13 provide access to the database by way of a user interface such that a user  
14 is allowed to use a data structure stored in the database.
- 15
- 16         22. A system for capturing and administering digital images, comprising:  
17           means for electronically receiving image data into an input module which is  
18 configured to buffer a desired quantity of image data at any given time;  
19           means for creating a trigger event;  
20           means for responding to the trigger event and electronically capturing a digital  
21 image from the image data received by the input module;  
22           means for responding to the trigger event and creating a desired data structure  
23 and storing the digital image in the data structure along with pre-defined identification  
24 data;  
25           means for storing the data structure in a database which is electronically  
26 connected to the system;

1 means for providing access to the database such that a user is allowed to use a  
2 data structure stored in the database.  
3

4 23. A system as in claim 22, further comprising:  
5 an image data generating means configured to transmit image data to the means  
6 for electronically receiving image data into an input module.  
7

8 24. A system as in claim 23, wherein the data structure comprises a database  
9 record.  
10

11 25. A computer readable medium having stored thereon computer executable  
12 instructions for performing a method for capturing and administering digital images, the  
13 method comprising:  
14

15 electronically receiving image data into an input module which is configured to  
16 buffer a desired quantity of image data at any given time;

17 activating a trigger to create a trigger event;

18 in response to the trigger event, a processing module electronically capturing a  
19 digital image from the image data being received by the input module;

20 further in response to the trigger event, a processing module creating a desired  
21 data structure and storing the digital image in the data structure along with pre-defined  
22 identification data;

23 storing the data structure in a database; and  
24

25 providing a user interface such that a user may use a data structure stored in the  
26 database.  
27

1           26. The computer readable medium of claim 25, wherein the user interface  
2 comprises a web browser configured to allow the user to access the digital image through  
3 a computer network and further comprising a video signal generator generating the image  
4 data.

5           27. The computer readable medium of claim 26, wherein the video signal  
6 generator is a video camera.

7  
8           28. The computer readable medium of claim 25, wherein the trigger is  
9 activated automatically based on the passage of time.

10  
11          29. The computer readable medium of claim 25, wherein the trigger is  
12 activated manually by a user.

13  
14          30. The computer readable medium of claim 25, further comprising:  
15            storing the data structure in the database in response to the database being  
16 available; and  
17            storing the data structure in local storage in response to the database being  
18 unavailable.

19  
20          31. The computer readable medium of claim 25, further comprising:  
21            initially storing the data structure in local storage in response to the database  
22 being unavailable ; and  
23            transferring at least one data structure from local storage to the database in  
24 response to the database becoming available.

1           32. The computer readable medium of claim 25, further comprising:  
2           archiving the image data to an archive medium;  
3           recording in a catalog the location of the archive medium and at least one  
4           identifier relating the archive medium to a location within an archive; and  
5           offering the catalog for use by the user.

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